



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE ARRESTS GANG MEMBER WHO ASSAULTED POLICE OFFICER**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – A 19-year-old gang member charged with assaulting a Providence police officer was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers Thursday following his appearance in court.

Rony Nijama, a citizen of Guatemala and a member of the violent “Mara Salvatrucha” (MS-13) street gang, has been placed in deportation proceedings based upon his being in the United States illegally. He is currently in ICE custody at the Bristol County Detention Center pending the outcome of his case.

Nijama’s arrest is the latest under “Operation Community Shield,” an ICE anti-gang initiative launched in March to target members of the MS-13 gang in six cities nationwide. To date, ICE agents, working with their federal, state and local counterparts, have arrested more than 135 MS-13 gang members nationwide.

“Criminal gangs like MS-13 have grown more widespread and more violent in recent years, but we’re prepared to fight them through aggressive law enforcement action and effective partnerships,” said Robin M. Avers, Special Agent-in-Charge of the ICE office in New England. “These gang members need to know that there is no room for criminal activity in our communities, and that we’re committed to ensuring public safety here in New England and nationwide. With the arrest of Rony Nijama, we’re sending that message.”

Since April 2004, ICE agents in Providence have arrested 20 MS-13 gang members, including the following:

- Celson Giron - A Guatemalan national, who was in the country illegally, was charged with assault with intent to commit murder. Giron is currently in ICE custody pending the outcome of his case.
- Cesar Alvarez Garcia - A Mexican national, who after being previously deported from the United States by ICE was arrested by Providence police for possession of a firearm.
- Jairo Perez - A citizen of Guatemala with a criminal history that includes arrest for first degree sexual assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and a conviction of assault on a police officer. ICE deported Perez on Feb. 2, 2005.
- Sergio Paiz - A Guatemalan national convicted of breaking and entering to commit a felony. Paiz was subsequently deported on July 9, 2004.

Operation Community Shield is a nationwide ICE initiative designed to disrupt and dismantle violent gang organizations and prosecute their members by employing the full range of authorities and investigative tools available to ICE. Under this initiative, ICE is employing its broad immigration authorities, both criminal and administrative, against gang members. At the same time, ICE uses its customs authorities to target narcotics smuggling and money laundering and to seek the forfeiture of assets.

Operation Community Shield draws on strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations. Locally, ICE has partnered with the Providence Police Department's Gang unit and the FBI.

The law enforcement actions to date have been conducted in coordination with law enforcement at the federal, state and local levels. ICE will also be working through its 54 Attaché offices overseas to cooperate with foreign governments that are also experiencing gang problems, particularly those in Central America.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*